
From: Gina Cook <shineon444@aol.com>
Sent: Friday, February 15, 2013 11:47 AM
To: AppropriationTestimony
Subject: Fwd: testimony Gina - InterCommunity Common Ground

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From: Gina Cook <shineon444@aol.com>
To: shineon444 <shineon444@aol.com>
Sent: Thu, Feb 14, 2013 11:09 pm
Subject: testimony

Good Evening, Governor Harp, Representative Walker and Distinguished
Members of the Committee,

My Name is Gina I am a client of Intercommunity and Common Ground.

It is my honor to be here to represent what amazing work they have
done for me to get me back to believing in me again. I came to
Intercommunity June of 2012 directly from Institute of Living. They
enrolled me in the "Secure Program" which is for those who are coming
out of the hospital and others who have somehow have gotten lost in
life. It was a six-week program for me. At first I was angry that I
couldn't just stay home. I tried to convince my family that I was
fine. Little did they know I was still suicidal,. My mind and my heart
broken into little pieces, to me would never be able to put back
together. I would cut myself, because it felt better to feel the pain
outside than in. I was hopeless, terrified, lonely, bitter, hurt beyond
belief, having flashbacks that were like a horror movie to me. When
these feelings come together it makes everything insensible and I would
freeze, hallucinate, hide, I died in my dreams a thousand times every

night. I would do anything to run from the haunting memories I carried for a such very long time.

I was provided a ride both to and from InterCommunity, every day. I am provided a Psychiatrist who keeps a very close eye on my medications, Psychologist that I can talk to, and daily groups. Paul Acker, Kristen and Maureen Mcdermit, are always there for me and have never closed their doors on me. They have always made time to help me find a way out of thoughts, and help me move through the situation I was experiencing. Common Ground became my safe place. This is the place that I would that I have nearly100% trust.

My depression, PTSD and anxiety started May 23, 1999. I had traveled with my company I was working for, to Palm Springs, California, for our yearly convention. I had worked my way up the scale to Operations Manager. A position I worked very hard for. On the first day of our arrival in California my room was broken into, I heard a noise and woke up only to see a man at the end of the bed. I was sexually assaulted and pretty banged up. I died that day. I was just 36 yrs old. On my return of that conference my dearest grade school friend passed away. I was the last to speak to her. I was crushed when she passed I carried her death in every day. Because of the incident in California and the death of my best friend. I could no longer work due to mental anguish and physical injuries. I was forced to move out of my home of 16 years. Lost my job and could no longer able to support my two children. I was lost, hurt and scared, disappointed and ashamed of my weakness.

I eventually married, built a successful business with my new husband; a beautiful new home and we had my third child together. I thought

maybe this time that just maybe I was headed in a new direction, Then I had to watch both my parents' death and suffering due to cancer. My own physical illness that kept me the hospital 3 times for a week each time. Then the economy hit our business there was no relief in site so we left the business and our home of 12 years First time in my life I was homeless.

We sold all we could to make our way to Connecticut where my husband had family. I left all my family and friends of a lifetime, behind. I can't explain that kind of pain.

It was April when I had my first suicide attempt by cutting my wrists and shaved my head. After not getting help I cleaned my own wounds and I tricked myself in believing I could heal everything by myself. But I was so haunted by everything that had happened. Every minute everyday the movie in my mind was ugly and terrifying.

At the end of May 2013 I suffered a complete breakdown nothing made sense. I thought the only way to make things right would be to go to sleep. I felt like it was because of me that my family was in danger. I was causing all these terrible things to happen. I had to save them so I took an overdose of sleeping pills. I remember very little about that day. I've been told how awful it was for me and everyone around me.

For me it was the beginning of recovery.

Intercommunity and Common Ground saved my life. They give me support and a safe place for me to start healing. I have many new friends, which helps the void of the loneliness in my life. They can give me answers for everything. I can go to anyone. They offer counseling and

help with jobs and prepare for clients to go back in the world with confidence. They give guidance to the homeless, help with housing. Common Ground also supports cooking and office experience. I was lucky to get a couple spots in the store, which has done miracles for me, and I also see the same in others. The store supports the young adults program. They offer job searching, computer skills and resumes. They have started a new business making dog treats. The support is endless. I have never heard or experienced a company offering this many services. Clients are getting the confidence and a feel for well being. Mindful skills for anything that makes us feel as safe. I am a long way from what I was when I first came to InterCommunity. I'm not there yet, I have faith I will be one day.

I am blessed with a second chance at life. Without them there would be no me.